CHAPTER III

SSA SAMPLE SELECTION REVIEW

1. Introduction. BAM samples of UI weeks-paid are selected for investigation and verification once a week by the SESAs. The size of the sample is based upon the SESA's annual sample allocation and its quarterly and annual targets established by the Department.

Among their other field monitoring responsibilities, Regional office staff will periodically review the SESA sample selection and assignment process. This will be done to ensure the integrity of SESA sampling and to ensure that SESA weekly levels are in keeping with their respective annual targets. The findings of these reviews will be used in the annual determination of SESA administration of BAM, as detailed in Chapter VII.

2. BAM Requirements. BAM methodology is intended to ensure the integrity of BAM data and sampling uniformity among the States. SESA sampling and case assignment must meet the following three requirements:

a. That the automated weekly sample selection has been performed correctly, i.e., that samples are representative of the survey population, are selected randomly, and include no extraneous cases (e.g., interstate claims, work-sharing, etc.).

b. That all cases selected are assigned for investigation. This means that:

(1) each case in the weekly sample is assigned. (An exception is a case selected for the sample that should not have been included in the sampling frame, e.g., supplemental pay, extended benefit, etc. These cases should not be assigned for investigation.)

Note: Changes in the weekly sample size should be arranged in advance, in keeping with BAM.sampling methodology. See 3.a. below.

(2) only the cases that are selected will be assigned for investigation (i.e., no substitutions will be made).

c. That adequate sample levels are selected/assicrned weekly to satisfy BAM random sampling methodology and to meet the quarterly and annual allocations of each SESA.

3. Overview of the weekly Sample Selection Process. Conducted by SESA personnel, the basic steps in the sampling process are:

a. Select the Weekly Sample. Each week the COBOL program will select a random sample of cases (often called the "hit file") from the weekly sampling frame, which is sorted by the amount paid (or offset or intercepted) and by Social Security number. This is done according to established BAM methodology and is routinely the normal weekly sample that the SESA BAM unit will investigate. (Ref.: ET Handbook No. 395, pages III-2 - 11.) The BAM supervisor may, on occasion, request in advance a smaller or increased sample to accommodate current staffing or other factors. Modified samples must be created by the COBOL program, not by deleting or adding cases after the sample is drawn. (Ref.: ET Handbook No. 395, page III-27.)

b. Create Sample Case Records. States are responsible for creating the Record Type -1 (ref: ET Handbook No. 395, pages III-38,39). In many States the Record Type 1 is downloaded via Sunlink from the SESA mainframe to the UI Sun system.

In States that do not have downloading capability, Record Type 1 can be loaded via 9 track tape. Alternatively a hardcopy (printout) of Record Type 1 can be produced by the SESA's ADP staff. BAM staff then manually enter the Record Type 1 data into the Sun computer, thus establishing the new case file to be assigned.

c. Assign Cases. BAM sample cases can be assigned directly to BAM investigators or to intermediate supervisors who then assign the cases to investigators. (For fuller detail on the entire case assignment process, see the UI-QC ADP User Guide, ET Handbook 400, 2nd Edition, Change 2, Chapter IV).

4. Review Process. Regional monitors are responsible for reviewing the SESA HAM sample selection and assignment. The review should be planned and carried out during the required on-site SESA BAM case review visit. Procedures follow for handling each of the four tasks required:

a. Determine that all sample cases mulled weekly are assigned. In this first task, the monitor's goal is to determine that the same number of cases is assigned as the number pulled and the cases assigned are the same as those pulled.

During the review, the monitor will need to obtain, for four weekly samples: a copy of both the printout of the "hit file" of sample cases selected by the 8AM COBOL program from the SESA's ADP unit and a printout of the cases assigned for that week. A user can obtain a report of cases assigned in a batch (or batch range) through the Database Management subsystem of the Desk Management menu option on the UIS Main Menu. once the user selects Database Management System, a ring menu will appear.

The user should highlight "Query-Language". A database listing will then be displayed. Select "UIDB" and select "NEW" on the ring menu. At this point the user can enter the script to produce the report.

If the user is working on the microcomputer in a State, the following query will produce the data for the report:

> select mbatch, mseq, minv from b master where mbatch between (begin batch #) and (end batch #) order by mbatch, mseq NOTE: enter the batch numbers without parentheses.
>
> Type control left bracket ("[) and highlight "Run". When the report is finished, it will be displayed on the screen. To print the report, highlight "Exit" and hit _ RETURN. Then choose "Output" and hit RETURN and highlight "Printer" and hit RETURN.
>
> This report can also be produced in the Region using the script below: select mbatch, mseq, minv from brx master where x is the specific region number, mstate matches ("State ID") and mbatch between (begin batch #) and (end batch #) order by mbatch, mseq
>
> NOTE: Use " " around the State ID and do not enclose data with parentheses.
>
> Type control left bracket ("[) and choose "Run". When the report is finished, it will be displayed on the screen. To print the report, select "Exit", then "Output", and "New-file". The user will be asked to name the file. Use this format, "/tmp/jfile name)" and select "Exit". Select "Exit" again and go to the shell using ":sh". Once in the shell, type, tprt and /tmp/ file name), and hit RETURN. Enter control D ("D) and RETURN to return to the menu.

By comparing these documents, one can determine whether all cases selected in the sample were assigned. If for any batch fewer cases were assigned than pulled, the RO monitor should determine the reason for not assigning the cases. Unless the unassigned cases did not belong in the sampling frame, the RO monitor should point out that such actions are contrary to BAM random sampling methodology and must be avoided in the interest of SESA BAM data integrity. The monitor should also remind the BAM Supervisor that if there is a need to assign fewer cases than were pulled in a given week, the Supervisor must call the National office for approval and instructions on how to randomly select cases for elimination.

The monitor can also determine <u>whether cases were assigned which were nat in the BAM COBOL-pulled sample</u> by comparing the "hit file" for a given weekly batch and the printout of cases assigned by the BAM supervisor for that week. Any discrepancies should be probed with the BAM supervisor to determine how and why such case substitution was made.

If the situation warrants, the monitor should offer technical assistance to ensure that the SESA will subsequently be able to follow proper sample selection and assignment procedures. Any discrepancies between samples selected and cases assigned should be reported to the National Office. Reporting procedures are described in section 5. below.

b. <u>Determine that no errors occur which result~in one or more incorrect records being downloaded to the Sun computer through the recl.dat file (Record Type 1)</u>. This determination regarding the accuracy of the creation of BAM Record Type 1 is to be made once each year. To make this determination, a monitor must request:

(1) a printout of the COBOL-generated "hit file", i.e., the weekly file of Type Three records originally pulled for the sample and

(2) a benefit history (printout) for-each respective claim sampled, and compare these documents with

(3) the Record Type One file (recl.dat) which was downloaded to the Sun system either via Sunlink or 9 track tape.

<u>This review is intended to make sure that following the COBOL sample selection, the computer program developed by the SESA always results in the downloading of the same claims as those included in the "hit file".</u>

Once a year monitors should review a minimum of four weekly batches for each SESA. If a State's computerized sampling program is creating and downloading wrong Record Type one data (i.e., wrong cases/claims), it is important that this problem be detected early. Monitors are advised to check <u>four or more consecutive weekly batches</u>, arbitrarily chosen, when they conduct this review each year.

Another round of spot-checking will be needed whenever a State makes basic changes in its automated system which might affect the creation of the proper Type One records for the claims in the COBOL-selected weekly batches.

It is advisable for the Ro monitor to request the BAM unit, well in advance of the monitoring visit, to make arrangements for the SESA to prepare the documents that will be needed (i.e., "hit files" and benefit histories of each claim to be verified) so that these will be available for the scheduled review. Some State ADP units may want at least a month's notice; others may need considerably more lead time, due to heavy work schedules.

Generally, a printout of the Type One records of the claims in the batches being reviewed (the recl.dat file) can be provided by the BAM supervisor. If this is not the case, these records (printouts) must be requested from the SESA ADP unit (also well in advance of the planned review).

For each sample claim, the essential data items that should be compared on the three documents are:

- SSN
- Batch #
- Key week ending date
- Amount paid, offset, or intercepted

If discrepancies are noted, monitors should promptly report them to the National Office. Monitors should confer with SESAs to learn why assignment discrepancies occur and may arrange for technical assistance from the National Office, if needed.

c. Determine the adequacy of sample levels investigated

(1) Reviewing Weekly Sample Levels. Regional Office monitors should review a SESA's sampling to determine if, on occasion, the State has dropped below its appropriate minimum weekly sample. The table which follows shows the normal, minimum, and maximum weekly sample sizes for various States (unidentified), based on their annual sample allocations.

Sample	Norm	Min	Max	Norm	Min	Max
360	7	5	9	90	81	99
480	9	6	12	120	108	132

Summary sample selection reports (QC-5A, 5B, and 5C) generated by the Regional BAM staff will assist them in reviewing a SESA's weekly sampling levels. A sample copy of these reports, dated October 29, 1990, is presented in Appendix C-1.

These reports should be run by the Regions every few weeks. Regional monitors can generate these reports for all States or selected States in their Region.

Summary report QC-5B (Appendix C-1) shows the number of cases pulled each week during the "current quarter," by State and batch. The weekly sample average for the current quarter is reported in column 2 for each State. The number of weeks in which a given State has dropped below its allowed minimum weekly sample size is reported in column 5. (In the period covered by this report, none of the States had fallen below their weekly minimum levels.)

Using this report, monitors will be able to spot those States which have dropped below their weekly minimum pulls. They should determine, in these situations, if there is a problem which calls for special Regional Office attention and point out that below-minimum samples may decrease the precision of estimated error rates. States which pull below-minimum samples may not have a sufficient number of cases to analyze types and causes of errors, or analyze population subgroups. Regional Office monitors should describe any technical assistance planned or offered to the SESA in the semi-annual Regional BAM reports prepared for the National Office.

Note: Each QC-5 report will include data through the most recent batch residing in the National office database. However, comparison reports for all States and batches may not be picked up during automated pick-up. Whenever the QC-5B report shows missing comparison reports, this does not mean that these States have failed to pull samples for these batches. The Regional Offices do not need to contact States about missing comparison reports. These reports will be picked up by the National Office at a later date.

(2) Monitoring Annual Sample Levels. Monitors need to be mindful of average sampling levels over the year to determine whether or not the SESAs are pulling samples large enough to satisfy their annual sampling goals. For example, a State with an annual allocation of 360 cases needs to maintain a weekly sample average of 7 cases. A 480 annual allocation requires an average weekly selection of 9 cases.

The minimum annual sample allocation is set by the Department. States may elect to sample above the minimum annual sample.

The example of report QC-5A in Appendix C-1 shows (in col. 8) that at the end of the first two quarters of 1990, only one SESA (Arizona was sampling at a rate well below its respective annual sampling target (column 7). Seven other SESAs show nominal sampling shortfalls of fewer than 30 cases (col. 7 figures minus col. 4 figures equal col. 8 figures).

Used throughout the year, the QC-5 reports should be useful to Regional Office monitors in identifying States that are sampling at an annual rate insufficient to meet their annual targets.

"Current quarter" is the latest quarter (partial or complete) covered in the reports.